

FROM THE BABYLON OF THE WEST

His goodness that, if you will adopt the course that you ought, you will have a good peace."¹

Catherine would gladly have left Avignon before, but the Pope, still feeling his spiritual powers too weak, wished to have him there until the very day of his departure. And not without

reason. The French cardinals made a last effort to draw him back, and produced a letter, apparently anonymous, but which they ascribed to some person with a reputation for sanctity and prophecy (possibly the Franciscan, Peter of Aragon, for whom he had a great esteem), commending the Pope's intention of

returning to Rome, but warning him that an attempt would be made to poison him if he came to Italy, advising him to postpone starting until the matter could be investigated, and, in any case, to begin the Crusade first. The letter was apparently shown to Catherine, probably by Fra Raimondo, at the Pope's request. She instantly wrote to Gregory, denouncing it in no measured terms as the work of an incarnate demon, "the sower of the most deadly poison that has for a long time been sowed in Holy Church," and a manifest forgery on the part of the devil's counsellors, who wish to impede the reformation of the Church for their personal ends.

"I conclude that I do not believe that the letter sent to you issues from that servant of God who has been named to your Holiness, nor that it was written very far away ; but I believe that it comes from near at hand, from the servants of the devil who have little fear of God. If I believed that it came from him, I should not consider him a servant of God, unless I saw other proofs of it. Pardon me, father, if I have spoken too presumptuously ; I humbly pray you to forgive me, and to give me your benediction. Remain in the holy and sweet charity of God. I beseech His infinite goodness to grant me the grace of soon seeing you, for His honour, set your foot outside the portals, with peace, repose, and quiet of soul and of body. I beseech you, sweet father, to give me audience, when it pleases your Holiness ; for I would fain come into your presence

¹ Letter 234